A2 cncl.

users by means of so-called GAP queries with which the active users using the PROFIBUS DP protocol for data transmission cyclically check whether new users have been connected to the network, wherein the slot time is the time for which an active user waits after a GAP query for a reply message from a polled user.

Page 4, 1st full paragraph: The invention offers the advantage that coupling devices are capable of independently measuring during operation of the network the slot time which is parameterized in the users and contains direct information on the extent of the network. The coupling devices can readily deduce from this information at which point in time after a poll message with acknowledge, no messages remain in the network. Since the coupling device automatically records information regarding the extent of the network, a corresponding parameterization of the coupling device is not required when the network is configured.

A3

Page 5, 2nd paragraph: Delete the entire paragraph.

Page 13, last paragraph: Figure 3 shows only the last three bits, two data bits 31 and 32 and a stop bit 33, of a message that corresponds to the PROFIBUS DP protocol. To stop bit 33 a further stop bit 34 is appended, which is followed by five bits 35 ... 39 of a CRC character. Downward pointing arrows above the individual bits indicate the scanning instants at which the signal value is scanned in the receiver. After the last bit 39, an idle state occurs corresponding to the indicated level 40 for the duration of the subsequent transmission pause.

A4

Page 39, 1st paragraph: Advantageously, the coupling devices 221 ... 226 measure the slot time during operation of the network. The slot time contains information on the extent of the network so that costly parameterization of the coupling devices regarding the network extent may be eliminated. The slot time T_s is parameterized in the users as follows:

A5